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BUILDING PARTNERS' CAPACITY

The Thousand-Ship Navy

Ronald E. Ratcliff

That which is common to the greatest number has the least care bestowed upon it. Every one thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual. For besides other considerations, everybody is more inclined to neglect the duty which he expects another to fulfill.

Aristotle, *Politics*

In the fall of 2005, Admiral Michael G. Mullen, the U.S. Navy's Chief of Naval Operations, challenged the world's maritime nations to raise what he called a "thousand-ship navy" to provide for the security of the maritime domain in the twenty-first century. Speaking at the Seventeenth International Seapower Symposium at the Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island, Admiral Mullen candidly admitted to the assembled chiefs of navy and their representatives from seventy-five countries that "the United States Navy cannot, by itself, preserve the freedom and security of the entire maritime domain. It must count on assistance from like-minded nations interested in using the sea for lawful purposes and precluding its use for others that threaten national, regional, or global security."¹ He had voiced the idea a month earlier in an address to students at the College, but he now elaborated the concept:

Because today's challenges are global in nature, we must be collective in our response. We are bound together in our dependence on the seas and in our need for security of this vast commons. This is a requisite for national security, global stability, and economic prosperity.

As navies, we have successfully learned how to leverage the advantages of the sea . . . advantages such as mobility, access, and sovereignty. . . . We must now leverage these same advantages of our profession to close seams, reduce vulnerabilities, and ensure the security of the domain, we collectively, are responsible for. As we combine our advantages, I envision a 1,000-ship Navy—a fleet-in-being, if you will, made up of the best capabilities of all freedom-loving navies of the world.²

Nearly two years after the bold proposal for a multinational maritime force, little progress seems to have been made in constituting this “navy-in-being.” This article argues that the thousand-ship navy, now more generally referred to within the U.S. Navy as the “Global Maritime Network,” or “Partnership,” is an idea well worth pursuing. But the Navy is struggling (perhaps even failing) to build support for it, for three reasons. First, it has not invested sufficient resources—monetary, administrative, or intellectual—to achieve the important goals articulated. Second, the Navy does not appear to appreciate fully the nature of the challenges it faces in overcoming the global maritime manifestation of the classic “tragedy of the commons” (which will be discussed below). Third, despite its rhetoric, the service has not made the thousand-ship navy/Global Maritime Partnership (TSN/GMP) a part of its current maritime strategy, which raises doubts as to whether such a concept will be incorporated in the new strategy currently being written. The absence of any mention of the thousand-ship navy in Admiral Mullen’s May 2007 testimony before Congress on the status and future of the service seems to belie the importance he has given it in forums involving the international naval community.³ The lack of such official support for the TSN/GMP has likely been interpreted by nations reluctant to participate as a sign of weakness in American commitment to the concept.

This article will present its argument in three parts. The first will address the goals and objectives of the thousand-ship navy/Global Maritime Partnership that have been communicated in such unofficial venues as the U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* and *Navy Times*. The second part will examine the challenges the U.S. Navy faces in convincing the rest of the world to expend limited resources on an international navy. The third will identify specific steps and initiatives that need to be given serious consideration if the potential and goals of the concept are to be realized. Unless the U.S. Navy is willing to move beyond the public-relations program that now seems to substitute for serious commitment, this bold concept risks becoming the maritime equivalent of Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations—that is, it will die, and not because it was a bad idea but because the country that proposed it was not committed to it.

A GLOBAL MARITIME SECURITY NETWORK

The rationale for the TSN has largely been seen within the U.S. Navy as emanating from increased international maritime traffic due to globalization. In late 2005, Navy officials asserted, “Promoting and maintaining the security of the global maritime commons is a key element because freedom of the seas is critical to any nation’s long-term economic well-being. . . . Policing and protecting the maritime commons against a wide spectrum of threats is a high priority for all

nations interested in economic prosperity and security that comes from a safe and free maritime domain.”⁴

The service has used a series of magazine articles and speeches by various senior officers, including Admiral Mullen, to explain and build support for the thousand-ship navy. The TSN/GMP is envisioned as an international maritime force, an aggregation of maritime entities, not just of the world’s navies. It would also include the world’s coast guards, seaborne shipping enterprises (shipping lines, port facilities, and other maritime-related entities), and various governmental agencies and nongovernmental bodies. In an effort to head off concerns about sovereignty, the Navy has attempted to make clear that participation would be strictly on a voluntary basis and that the goal is simply to meet the “compelling need” that has emerged “for a global maritime security network, a ‘Navy of Navies,’ to protect the maritime domain and to ensure the lifeblood of globalization—trade—flows freely and unencumbered.”⁵ Ten guiding principles have been established in these public writings and statements for the “Navy of Navies”:⁶

- National *sovereignty* would always be respected.
- Nations, navies, and maritime forces would participate where and when they have *common interests*.
- The focus would be solely on security in the *maritime* domain: ports, harbors, territorial waters, maritime approaches, the high seas, and international straits, as well as the numerous exploitable seams between them.
- While no nation can do everything, *all nations could contribute something* of value.
- The TSN/GMP would be a *network* of international navies, coast guards, maritime forces, port operators, commercial shippers, and local law enforcement, all working together.
- Nations or navies having the capacity would be expected to *help less capable ones* increase their ability to provide maritime security in their own ports, harbors, territorial waters, and approaches.
- Nations or navies that need assistance *would have to ask for it*.
- Each geographic region would develop *regional maritime networks*.
- To be effective and efficient, the Global Maritime Partnership would have to *share information widely*; classified maritime intelligence would be kept to a minimum.

- This would be a long-term effort, but the security of the maritime domain demands that it *start now*.

To operationalize the concept, the U.S. Navy identified two objectives it considers critical to protecting the world's waterways and facilitating the free flow of trade among nations: increased "maritime domain awareness," through greater collaboration and transfer of information among nations about anything maritime, and positioning of maritime assets so as to be able to respond to crises or emergencies. The Navy views the TSN/GMP as fundamentally a means of sharing responsibility for maritime security—"importing it into regions where it is lacking and exporting it from regions that have the capability and desire to do so."⁷ Proponents argue that the concept is already, to some extent, in being; they regularly point to instances where navies have coordinated operations on an ad hoc basis to achieve necessary and worthwhile goals. Among the most cited are Task Force 150, which operates in and around the Saudi Arabian Peninsula; the Indonesian tsunami-relief effort of late 2004 and 2005; and the Straits of Malacca counterpiracy agreement, known as MALSINDO, between Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

Yet despite such efforts to "sell" the idea of a thousand-ship navy, in late 2006 Admiral Mullen felt obliged to seek active support for it at two international maritime conferences. At the Mediterranean Regional Seapower Symposium in Venice and at the Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Pearl Harbor, he told his contemporaries that it was time to "move beyond dialogue" and to "take tangible steps" that would "put these powerful ideas to work at sea."⁸ He argued three compelling reasons for moving faster to constitute the Global Maritime Partnership. First, the pace of globalization is raising the stakes for security in the maritime domain, where 90 percent of the world's trade passes from production to market; second, globalization has brought, along with its benefits, new vulnerabilities as well, particularly to "ideologues, pirates, proliferators, criminals, and terrorists" who not only are likely to target maritime regions but are "innovative, smart and determined, and [able to] often act—and react—faster than many of our traditional governing bodies."⁹ Third, Admiral Mullen suggested, rapid advances in technology and information technology can significantly facilitate multinational naval operations, but only if nations take advantage of them.

Important as these points are, however, perhaps better explicating the way ahead and accenting the tangible steps the U.S. Navy has already taken to make the concept a reality would make a stronger argument for it. Also, and though the Navy has made clear that it has no desire to dictate the terms of participation, it must provide leadership in the form of action to draw in other navies. Specifically, the Navy would gain greater purchase among the world's maritime

entities by acquiring, employing, and sharing the necessary information and communications technologies than by merely highlighting the possibilities they offer. Operations at sea cannot take place without the means to coordinate the actions of participating units, and they cannot succeed without current and actionable intelligence. Until the Navy can explain or demonstrate how both functions will be accomplished in the TSN/GMP, it should expect only tepid responses from potential participants.

Today, on the eve of the Eighteenth International Seapower Symposium, two years after the thousand-ship navy concept was introduced, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the concept has yet to gain widespread support among the world's maritime enterprises. Despite the success of combined naval operations in highly publicized operations that averted or relieved major human disasters around the world, many countries remain cautious about "joining" or being seen as advocates of the Global Maritime Partnership. However logical and benign the thousand-ship navy seems to the United States, other countries remain openly wary of its intended purposes and possible unintended consequences. They have legitimate concerns, and if the U.S. Navy is to constitute a thousand-ship navy it must address them forthrightly. That challenge is not inconsequential. Hyperbole and rhetorical calls to act for the greater good of a globalizing world will not be sufficient. Indeed, if the logic of the TSN/GMP has clear appeal to many nations, the concept also has weaknesses that if not resolved will likely prove fatal.

"THE TRAGEDY OF THE (MARITIME) COMMONS"

Ruin is the destination toward which all men rush, each pursuing his own best interest in a society that believes in the freedom of the commons. Freedom in a commons brings ruin to all.

Garret Hardin

The "maritime commons" comprise seas and waterways either beyond sovereign control of any nation or under the shared sovereignty of two or more. With no single guarantor of their security and well-being, they are attractive for illicit activities. Since September 2001 the U.S. Navy has become particularly concerned about these areas and has called for greater scrutiny over and the "policing and protecting" of those where the collective economic prosperity of the world's trading nations might be threatened.¹⁰

As Admiral Mullen has declared, the expansive maritime commons and the wide range of threats that exist there are beyond the capacity of any navy, including that of the United States, to police or control. The nature of those threats, however, is not self-evident, nor is their urgency commonly acknowledged.

Among the reasons for this, one of the most important is that the benefits that accrue from the maritime commons are not equally shared. Where the United States sees in the maritime common the free flow of commerce, many other states are forced to live with entirely different circumstances. For major trading nations like the United States the concern with respect to the maritime commons is a disruption in shipping, which would cause significant perturbations in the world's economy. Arguably, however, those effects would be brief and quickly overcome. The problems that many other nations face in the maritime commons, however, are not potential but present, not episodic but long term, and they affect "human" security more than national or economic security. These challenges include waterborne pandemics, maritime crime and piracy, the misuse of ocean resources, and the smuggling of contraband goods, people, and drugs. These challenges are largely regional; they do not threaten the global village but constitute a menace to the well-being of local populations.

Thus the "tragedy of the *maritime* commons"—notwithstanding assertions that everyone benefits from the security of the maritime commons, nations benefit so unequally that many see no reason to contribute to it.¹¹ Many nations that lie near or astride important parts of the maritime commons but do not benefit significantly from world trade are hard pressed to justify spending their limited resources to help the world's wealthiest countries get richer. The U.S. Navy's seeming lack of appreciation for these differing equities may account for much of its inability to generate enthusiasm.

This raises an important challenge for the combatant commands—building capacity for partnership through security cooperation. If the Navy is to nurture an international global maritime network of entities that contribute to the maritime domain, it must move past a rhetoric focused on a threat to world trade. It must find ways to make the thousand-ship navy a solution to a wider set of problems.

INTERNATIONAL DOUBT AND RETICENCE

Much of the contemporary naval literature refers to providing for or protecting the "global maritime commons" as if it were a self-evident good. But as we have seen, the reality is that individuals usually only act when it benefits them directly. Aristotle, in the passage quoted above, is likely the first to warn against assuming too much collective good will as being the natural order of things.¹² During the Peloponnesian War, in the fifth century BC, the Athenians made the point harshly to envoys of the Aegean island of Melos (as reported by Thucydides): "You know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."¹³

Neither are the navies of the world equals; the U.S. Navy is, and will likely remain for some time to come, completely and absolutely dominant wherever and whenever it chooses to operate. Admiral Mullen's predecessor, Admiral Vern Clark, bluntly stated what most in the service believe, that the U.S. Navy would and should "operate from the maritime domain anywhere, anytime, without a permission slip." While the ramifications of American combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are beyond the scope of this article, it seems apparent that American willingness to "go it alone" gives many nations reasons for reluctance to join a potentially encumbering, if ad hoc and voluntary, arrangement like the Global Maritime Partnership.

ASIAN CONCERNS

India, for example, has been quite candid in its assessment of American interest in the global maritime domain. A recent article in an influential Indian national security publication seems to capture a broadly held sentiment about American intentions.

Among the foremost security concerns of the nation after 9/11 is the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists on its territory and their proliferation through inimical states. The global reach of the predominantly maritime threat and the "overstretch" of the US Navy have led to the initiation of a series of American initiatives like Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), Container Security Initiative (CSI) and Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI), all aimed at mobilizing global support to secure the US "homeland."

A "Thousand-ship Navy" (TSN) is another novel concept; recently defined . . . as "a global maritime partnership that unites maritime forces, port operators, commercial shippers, and international, governmental and nongovernmental agencies to address mutual concerns." . . . The TSN is thus show cased as a benign initiative, aimed at obtaining the co-operation of "friendly navies."¹⁴

The implication here is that the TSN/GMP is largely an attempt by the United States to secure its homeland while avoiding the controversial aspects of the programs listed above and the legitimate concerns they have generated for national sovereignty. That said, the Indians have also noted, pragmatically, that their nation has much to gain: it would gain access to the U.S. intelligence grid; information sharing would neither impinge on India's sovereignty nor conflict with international law; and participation would provide India politico-diplomatic goodwill, since it is unlikely that it will formally join the Proliferation Security Initiative, at least in the near term.¹⁵

Possibly more surprising has been the assessment by Australian and other Asia-Pacific security analysts that the TSN/GMP is not feasible in Asia because of differing maritime security strategies, divergent perceptions of the maritime

threat, and long-standing and unresolved territorial disputes, particularly in the South China Sea.¹⁶ In this view, China is an impediment to the thousand-ship navy, because of its support of regional maritime projects and agreements that the United States and its principal Asian ally, Japan, have refused to join.¹⁷ Nowhere has this been more evident than in the Straits of Malacca, where the U.S.-sponsored RMSI has drawn heavy criticism from Malaysia, Indonesia, and even Singapore.¹⁸ China, in contrast, has gained extensive diplomatic leverage by calls for nonintervention by other navies in the straits and by financial support of local maritime initiatives. Chinese relations with Taiwan impede some navies from participation in the TSN/GMP. Japan and Korea, however, are strong proponents of the concept, which adds another complication to its implementation because it puts them at odds with China.

China's own strategic calculus and security strategy vis-à-vis the United States are works in progress. Recently, Jerry M. Hultin, former Under Secretary of the Navy, and Admiral Dennis Blair, former commander of U.S. Pacific Command, wrote,

As China's own naval power grows, it will need to fashion a naval policy within a national security policy that supports its own interests. It can cooperate with the United States by coordinating naval strategy and deployments, as do many of America's current allies; it can fashion its own separate strategy, seeking to compete with or displace American strategy, or it can pursue a mixed strategy, combining elements of both approaches.

For its part, the United States will need to make adjustments in its policies and strategies as Chinese military power grows.¹⁹

While the potential exists for the United States to make room for China and other problematic countries, such as Iran and Venezuela, to join the thousand-ship navy, mutual distrust will make it difficult to argue that "everybody is welcome." In point of fact, not everyone is welcome, and the criteria that define "like-minded" interests have yet to be clearly delineated. Yet Russian naval participation in NATO's Operation ACTIVE ENDEAVOUR may provide a model for how countries with competing national interests can participate constructively in the TSN/GMP.

The principles and the goals of the thousand-ship navy are nearly synonymous with those of the *U.S. National Strategy for Maritime Security*. The latter is based on three broad tenets: preserving the freedom of the seas, which includes the right of innocent and transit passage and access to the world's ports; facilitating and defending the free flow of maritime commerce; and promoting the movement of desirable goods and people across borders while screening out dangerous people and goods.²⁰ The similarity in terms and concepts is not lost

on those who must decide whether to participate in the Global Maritime Partnership and then justify their choices to domestic authorities who critically examine the cost and kinds of operations their naval forces conduct. Unless compelling reasons can be found that link participation directly to local security, few naval forces will be willing to join, even briefly.

CONTENTIOUS OBJECTIVES AND CHRONIC PROBLEMS

As noted earlier, increased maritime security involves two primary objectives: an effective level of maritime domain awareness must be established, and naval forces must be in the right places at the right times. Both present considerable operational and administrative challenges.

The level of maritime domain awareness necessary to disrupt or eliminate illicit enterprises requires information and intelligence analysis on a massive scale. Information is available in many disparate and potentially valuable forms, such as invoices on maritime cargo, shipping companies, port activity, insurance assessments, fishery area control and management schemes, naval and national intelligence, and countless others. While the TSN/GMP is envisioned as comprising regional maritime networks, the questions of whom these networks would involve, where they would be, and how they would collect, process, and disseminate information are all yet to be resolved. Three exemplars are cited as steps in the right direction: the Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Center in the Mediterranean, the Malacca Strait Patrol Agreement, and Task Force 150, in the Red Sea and Strait of Hormuz. These efforts have shown the potential of coordinated maritime operations, yet they have also made clear the substantial problems that arise when critical information is classified by a nation. As the U.S.-led counterdrug operations in the Caribbean have shown conclusively, actionable intelligence is the single most important prerequisite for interdicting illicit traffic at sea.²¹

Putting maritime assets in the right location is equally problematic. Most nations do not have the resources to sustain units where they can be most effective. Often, activity of the kind that the Global Maritime Partnership is intended to combat occurs in the waters of the world's poorest nations; their navies find the distances involved too great, but national sensitivity over sovereignty often precludes them from asking for help. In this sense national pride is an impediment to greater cooperation among the world's navies, even in a framework as flexible, informal, and ad hoc as the thousand-ship navy. Additionally, the rules of engagement that govern the actions of each navy begin with national rules and regulations and so may be at odds with the wishes and desires of the United States and its vision for the TSN/GMP. The experience of U.S. intervention efforts in the Western Hemisphere provides numerous examples of conflicting national priorities and perceptions of the issues leading to less than optimal results.²²

Among the critical challenges, then, that confront successful implementation of the Global Maritime Partnership, four stand out. The first is building trust. Long-held animosities, suspicions of other nations' intentions, and the general secrecy that surrounds national security plans affect relations among some of the most important potential contributors to the thousand-ship navy. The list is large—India and Pakistan, China and India, Japan and China, Korea and Japan, Australia and Asia, Southeast Asia and China, Chile and Argentina, and Venezuela and the United States, to name a few—and the issues complicated and often intense. The second challenge concerns capability and capacity. Many navies and coast guards find it difficult to act even when in a position to do so. Most countries' navies are more akin to coast guards. Ships and craft suited for customs and border patrol or for monitoring fisheries and economic exclusion zones are not well suited to dealing with terrorists or proliferators of weapons of mass destruction. Likewise, the carrier-centric U.S. Navy is ill suited to operations in the littorals.

A third issue involves jurisprudence. Domestic and international law governing conduct on the seas is notoriously vague and complex, which complicates the actions of forces operating within a construct like the Global Maritime Partnership. Individual navies or commanders willing to act consistently with the intent of the TSN/GMP may be overruled by sovereign authorities because of the vagaries of the law. Problems of this sort already impede the kind of cooperation envisioned by the TSN/GMP, and there would be no mechanism within the partnership to resolve them. Finally, there is the issue of communications. While new communications technologies offer many channels, "common operating pictures" and maritime domain awareness require more than Web portals and radio circuits. An operational picture at sea is fluid, and a lapse of information flow for even a few hours can destroy any chance for coordinated or purposeful action.

Nothing in this list is new, but the world's navies have yet to find ways to resolve them. The Global Maritime Partnership is attractive for that very reason to many nations that have been frustrated by other attempts and see in the TSN/GMP at least a promising start. Concrete action and active dialogue, however, must replace rhetoric and pleas for greater commitment on the part of others. If the thousand-ship navy is to survive and grow, the U.S. Navy will need to take a stronger role in constituting a "navy in being," in a way that does not alarm or put off potential participants. It must be more a catalyst than a leader.

TIME FOR COMMITMENT

Long a purpose-built "blue water" fleet, the U.S. Navy continues to struggle mightily to transform itself into a force that can meet the operational challenges

of littoral waters.²³ Moreover, the inability of the Navy, or of its joint and inter-agency partners, to secure the strategic approaches to the United States against drug traffickers despite nearly twenty years of intensive effort speaks starkly to the magnitude of taking on the global maritime commons. Still, the thousand-ship navy makes sense, and for the reasons Admiral Mullen identified in 2005. But unless the U.S. Navy shows commitment to the Global Maritime Partnership by programs and initiatives that directly support it, navies that have not yet signed on are unlikely to do so any time soon.

The U.S. Navy can and should consider seriously a number of steps in order to revive enthusiasm for the thousand-ship navy. The first is to *make it an important element of the forthcoming maritime strategy*. Seapower in the twenty-first century is unique in history. Where once fleet power was determined by the amalgamation of large numbers of capital ships and their escorts, modern weapons make such assemblages dangerous and impracticable. In any case, the world's nations have demonstrated a growing unease about, if not downright unwillingness to follow, American-conceived and -led military operations. A clear and unambiguous statement of commitment to the Global Maritime Partnership in the maritime strategy now being formulated would signal to the world's navies that the U.S. Navy is serious about a global approach to protecting the maritime commons.

Provide clearer guidance about the structure of the TSN/GMP. One of the advantages of the concept is its ad hoc nature, a “come as you are, when you can” approach that frees navies from formal agreements or binding obligations. This is also, unfortunately, one of its greatest weaknesses. Without greater specificity about operating procedures, command relationships, and basic rules of engagement, navies are hard pressed to explain or justify their commitment to their national leaderships. There are several rudimentary steps that the U.S. Navy and committed partners can take to eliminate the less beneficial elements of “ad-hocracy.” One would be establishing a basic command structure dividing the maritime commons into defined operating areas and assigning nominal leadership roles for regional powers. Another would be to delineate a basic set of rules of engagement addressing obvious and necessary restraints and constraints. A third would be linking the TSN/GMP with existing organizations such as the International Maritime Organization and with the antipiracy centers being established in various parts of the world.

Third, forget GFS and embrace TSN/GMP-FS. Part of the current Navy strategy is to construct and deploy “Global Fleet Station” (GFS) ships to support the ships of the U.S. Navy and regional partners in a variety of maritime and littoral operations. These ships and the operational ideas behind them show how the Global Maritime Partnership could work and could serve as fleet experiments to

identify operational and administrative problems and facilitate international solutions. A group of dedicated TSN/GMP–Fleet Station ships, under the administrative control of current U.S. maritime component commanders, could be deployed to show Navy commitment to the concept and entice other nations to participate. These platforms could be used as test beds to experiment with command-and-control procedures using common communications equipment and operating concepts.

Make the U.S. Coast Guard a major element of the thousand-ship navy. Few navies have, like the U.S. Navy, the sole purpose of warfighting. Most navies, as we have noted, are more like the Coast Guard, tasked with maritime law enforcement and stewardship of their countries’ maritime resources. Indeed, some analysts have suggested that we are really speaking of the “thousand-ship coast guard.” Given the kinds of operations that are likely to occupy the Global Maritime Partnership, placing the Coast Guard at or near the vanguard has an indisputable logic. If the TSN/GMP is to be a network of all maritime-related organizations, not just an ad hoc collection of navies, the Coast Guard seems to be the most logical agent to coordinate it. The Navy, then, needs to find the Coast Guard a prominent role in the development and growth of the concept and, relatedly, to consider how the Navy and Coast Guard could operate as a national force in American territorial waters as well as abroad.

Partners must be enabled to see the same operating picture the U.S. Navy does— allies and coalition partners have been telling the Navy that for years, and seemingly endless studies of communication, command, and control only confirm it. Until the U.S. Navy provides a portal through which its partners can tap into its information, it cannot expect them to contribute freely to it. Until the Navy can show that it will give as good as it gets, reluctant partners will continue to have a sound reason to resist meaningful participation.

Finally, if the U.S. Navy is to gain credibility and support for the TSN/GMP, it must *take steps to support and leverage recent efforts by America’s political leadership to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)* within the next two years.²⁴ American objections have ranged from concerns about loss of national sovereignty to unease over access to important but often contentious seaways. The unwillingness of the United States to sign an agreement that almost all of the rest of the world has ratified makes advocacy for the TSN/GMP appear hypocritical. UNCLOS is not a perfect document, but such agreements rarely are, and America already purports to abide by its rules; formal ratification should be painless, and it would constitute a major step toward protecting the global maritime commons. The nation must demonstrate that it honors Admiral Mullen’s statement that “acting in one’s national interest” serves the global interest as well.²⁵

The thousand-ship navy is a concept whose time has come. The U.S. Navy can no longer protect the world's most important waterways alone. Still, the Navy's conception of the maritime commons as being a self-evident good must be modified both in word and in deed. Naval strategies and concepts do not stand in isolation from the particular issues and interests that dictate national security policies. Hence, the U.S. Navy must make clear its firm commitment to, and the benign intent of, the thousand-ship navy through concrete acts. The alternative is to lose the opportunity for an innovative and workable solution to an age-old problem—protecting the freedom of the seas in a time of great uncertainty and peril.

NOTES

- This article appears also as chapter 4 of Derek Reveron, ed., *Shaping the Security Environment*, Newport Paper 29 (Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2007).
1. Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, remarks delivered at the Seventeenth International Seapower Symposium, Newport, Rhode Island, 21 September 2005.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Statements of Adm. Michael G. Mullen, Chief of Naval Operations, before the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Seapower, 3 May 2007, and the Senate Armed Services Committee, 29 March 2007.
 4. John Morgan, Jr. [Vice Adm., USN], and Charles Martoglio [Capt., USN], "The 1,000-Ship Navy: Global Maritime Network," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* 131 (November 2005), p. 14.
 5. John Morgan, Jr. [Vice Adm., USN], "A Navy of Navies," *RUSI Defence Systems* (Summer 2006), p. 66.
 6. Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, remarks delivered at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Future Maritime Warfare Conference, London, 13 December 2005.
 7. Morgan and Martoglio, "The 1,000-Ship Navy," pp. 16–17.
 8. Adm. Michael G. Mullen, USN, remarks delivered at the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, 31 October 2006.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Morgan and Martoglio, "The 1,000-Ship Navy," p. 14.
 11. See Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* (1968), pp. 1243–48, for a full description of how the "commons" are generally treated and how self-interest overcomes more altruistic notions.
 12. Aristotle's critique of Socrates in *Politics*, Book II, Part III, arises in his comments on Plato's *Republic*, wherein he objects to Socrates' description and advocacy of communal ownership as a "sign of perfect unity in a state," a condition that he calls impracticable.
 13. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Dutton, 1910; repr. 1914), Book V, chap. 17, "The Melian Conference," p. 394. The translation by Rex Warner in 1954 (New York: Penguin) reads, somewhat more expressively: "The standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept" (p. 402).
 14. Gurpreet S. Khurana, "'Thousand-Ship Navy': A Reincarnation of the Controversial P.S.I.?" *ISDA Commentary*, 28 December 2006.
 15. Vivek Raghuvanshi, "India Intrigued by 1,000-Ship Navy Idea," *DefenseNews.com*.
 16. Wendell Minnick, Taipei, "U.S.-Led Proposal Won't Work for Most of Asia," *DefenseNews.com*.
 17. Ibid.

18. For an overview of the RMSI see Admiral Tom Fargo's address to the Military Operations and Law Conference, Victoria, British Columbia, on 3 May 2004, available at www.pacom.mil/speeches/.
19. Jerry M. Hultin [Hon.] and Dennis Blair [Adm., USN (Ret.)], "Naval Power and Globalization: The Next Twenty Years in the Pacific," *Politique Americaine* (September 2006).
20. *United States National Strategy for Maritime Security* (Washington, D.C.: White House), March 2005, available at www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/maritime-security.html.
21. For these issues in one important application, see Craig H. Allen, "The Limits of Intelligence in Maritime Counterproliferation Operations," *Naval War College Review* 60, no. 1 (Winter 2007), pp. 35–52.
22. For a detailed discussion of the problems that characterize U.S. government agency efforts to combat the flow of drugs into the United States, see *The Illicit Drug Transit Zone in Central America*, hearing and briefing before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 109th Congress, 9 November 2005, no. 109–139.
23. While such initiatives as naval expeditionary warfare forces have been fielded, the Navy's premier program for littoral operations, the Littoral Combat Ship, is in disarray; cost overruns threaten the future of that program. The Navy has yet to build support in Congress for its 313-ship fleet; the LCS episode threatens the Navy's credibility as to whether it can sustain a shipbuilding program to get to that number.
24. On 15 May 2007, President George W. Bush released a formal statement calling on the Senate to ratify UNCLOS.
25. See note 1, above.